FINDING THE FACTS: THE ROLE OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

An Address by: Allen W. Dulles
The New England Governor's Conference
Boston, Mass. -- 16 November 1951

When I was asked to speak to you today, your program committee suggested that I probably would not wish to talk about the work of the Central Intelligence Agency as being too "secret." In turn they proposed that I discuss some phase of our foreign policy.

Tempting as this invitation is, I must decline it for good and sufficient reasons as I shall explain. On the other hand, I am very glad of this opportunity to discuss the objectives of our work in the Central Intelligence Agency, and in particular to outline some of the developments in the Agency during this last year since General Bedell Smith became Director.

In the Central Intelligence Agency we have a clear mandate as to the scope of our work. We are fact finders not policy makers. Foreign policy is the responsibility of the President and the State Department. Our work, however, has a very difinite relation to foreign policy since under the law setting up the Agency and under the directives of the National Security Council we have the task of correlating and evaluating information relating to the national security as a guide to those who formulate our foreign policies and our defense program.

In the world of today this is quite enough of a job and we have no inclination to stray into the fields of others.

Let me briefly illustrate the nature of this task. Simply put, the

Agency is the central point in government for assembling and analyzing information relating to foreign countries whose policies and actions affect our national security. The order of our priority is the order of importance in relation to national security; information on the Soviet Union and its satellites naturally takes first rank.

Intelligence for our purposes is not merely a statistical survey of the number of divisions, airplanes, or submarines a potential enemy may have. Stalin's state of mind is a more important intelligence item than the location of many Soviet divisions. The intentions of the Kremlin are facts which for our purposes are generally the most important and of course the hardest to ascertain.

It is generally much easier to know the capabilities of the possible antagonist than his immediate intentions. Here is a typical example. When in November 1950 the United Nations forces drove north in Korea toward the Yalu, it had not been difficult to ascertain the presence of a mass of Chinese forces in Manchuria. The question was whether or not they would move southward and intervene actively in the Korean war. This was a question of intention -- the intention which existed in the minds of a very few men. In this type of situation the best that the intelligence officer can do is to draw a careful blance sheet of the evidence, pro and con, and the harassed policy maker or field strategist must determine his course. When sound intelligence is lacking, those who determine policy are like mariners without a chart.

Your program committee was quite right, of course, in suggesting that certain phases of our work in the CIA are not subject to public

disclosure. That is also true of many other departments and agencies of government, including in particular the Department of State, the Department of Defense and the Atomic Energy Commission.

It is perfectly right and proper that we should know what the Department of State is constituted to do, just as it would be highly improper if we expected the Department to tell us all the details of its negotiations; or in the case of the Department of Defense, how it proposes to conduct the defense of the United States or its latest achievements in the field of secret weapons.

It is very much the same with the Central Intelligence Agency. Under the law enacted in 1947 which provided for the unification of the armed services in the Department of Defense, a Central Intelligence Agency was created and placed under the National Security Council. The Council, our highest policy making body in planning for national defense, is presided over by the President and includes among its members the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense. The 1947 law entrusted to the Central Intelligence Agency certain functions which are publicly admitted and publicly prosecuted. It is also provided that certain functions of common concern to various departments and agencies of the government in the general field of intelligence, upon assignment by the National Security Council, should be carried out by the Agency. Certain of these are of a confidential character.

Thus for the first time in our history provision has been made in the American govern mental scheme for an Agency to coordinate our intelligence activities. This does not in any way affect the intelligence

collecting functions of the Department of State or of the Armed Services. The Agency should see to it, however, that there is no unnecessary duplication and that there are no areas of the intelligence field left uncovered insofar as human ingenuity can cover them.

This new setup also permits the intelligence product of all of the agencies of government to be analyzed at one central focal point where it can be put into a form that will best serve those who must determine our policy in the fields of foreign relations and national defense. In effect the CIA is a "clearing house for facts" in the international field. It has no police powers and no functions in the field of internal security which is largely the job of the F.B.I. Of course if our intelligence work turns up any subversive activities which affect our domestic security, we would pass the story along to the F.B.I.

The Central Intelligence Agency also has the duty to collect certain types of information to supplement that obtained through other departments.

These functions of the CIA are a matter of public knowledge. This does not mean that we disclose our methods and techniques in securing information or in cooperating with other government departments in carrying out certain activities which form a part of our overall strategy in the Cold War.

It was the experience gained in two world wars which showed the need to build an effective central intelligence service. During World War II, under the stress of that emergency, we pulled together professional

soldiers and sailors and airmen, businessmen, professors, and lawyers, and Jacks of all trades into the Office of Strategic Services. This organization under General William J. Donovan's dynamic leadership, gathered intelligence and analyzed it. It also performed certain clandestine activities in aid of the underground forces which were fighting Nazism, Fascism and Japanese militarism in the occupied areas. The CIA has recruited much of its personnel from among the men and women trained in the O.S.S. and has also drawn heavily on the Armed Services.

In World War II we showed that we had in this country the stuff out of which an effective intelligence organization could be built. We worked side by side with the British and profited from their long years of experience. I think it is fair to say, however, that before the war was over we were able to hold our own with them in many of the fields of intelligence operations.

But even if the experience of two World Wars had not proved the necessity for a central intelligence agency, the vast complication of world affairs since the last war would have taught us that we could not get along without it.

The intelligence on which a foreign policy or our defense policy can be based is no longer obtainable by the old methods and techniques largely based on conventional diplomacy. Today a rebel leader or a nationalist rabble rouser may become more important to our policy than a prime minister, and a scientific development in hostile hands may be more significant for our defense than the secret treaty of a potential enemy.

Once upon a time it was chiefly economic and territorial expansionism which threatened the peace. Today there are far more subtle trends for the intelligence officer to analyze, such as subversive communist penetration and exuberant nationalism.

Added to these complications we have to face the fact that the Soviet bloc has determined to cut itself off from the rest of the world. Since the dark ages there never has been such a blackout of information about a great segment of the globe. The normal information about the Soviet and its satellites - the type of information that they can get about us by reading our daily press - is rarely available through the usual channels.

This is one of the most deeply disturbing features of the international situation today. Why is the Soviet going to this vast trouble and expense to keep us ignorant of what they are doing; to keep from us as best they can the flow of information which over the years one country has normally had about another for the asking. Their policy in this regard is stiffening. The veil of secrecy has been drawn tighter each year since the close of the war.

We can only speculate as to the reasons. Is it to try to profit from the element of surprise; to keep up the feeling of tension under which they hope we will break; to get us off on false scents; to keep their own people in ignorance of the outside world; or to hid their own dificiencies.

Possibly it is a combination of all these motives plus traditional Russian secretiveness, for the Soviet has borrowed and improved upon the techniques of information blackout inherited from the days of Imperial Russia.

An interesting commentary on the old Czarist policy of secrecy is found in the recently published journal of the Marquis de Custine, a distinguished French traveller who visited Russia in 1839. The author vividly describes the disadvantages at which Western diplomats were placed in dealing with Russia of that day.

"If better diplomats are found the Russians than among highly civilized peoples," he writes, "it is because our papers warn them of everything that happens and everything that is contemplated in our countries. Instead of disguising our weaknesses with prudence, we reveal them with vehemence every morning; whereas the Russians' Byzentine policy, working in the shadow, carefully conceals from us all that is thought, done and feared in their country. We proceed in broad daylight; they advance under cover: the game is one-sided."

This is still true today, but the Kremlin has vastly tightened the controls of the old Byzantine policy. A trip like Custine's of 1839 would be unthinkable these days.

In one respect, however, the Soviet policy in the information field has ostensibly had to relax certain controls. Today even the people of the Soviet expect some information from their ruler and in this regard they cannot safely be ignored. In many fields, particularly in foreign matters and in everything beyond the ken of the people who are addressed, lies can take the place of facts. But when it comes to dealing with matters which are known to thousands of Soviet citizens, the best the Kremlin's spokesman can do is to slant the facts. For example, from time to time we get Soviet announcements of their own production figures as they

take pride in comparing these figures with those of Czarist days and even with their own pre-war production. Of course they are very careful to give us very general, and in many cases cryptic figures, and they do not favor us publicly with information as to their military production.

The other day Lavrenti Beria, prominent member of the Politburo and head of the Secret Police, was chosen to make the pronouncement for the Soviet on the 34th anniversary of the October Revolution. The choice of the Soviet Police Head for this somewhat mis-cast role had no great significance. Each year, unless Stalin himself decides to make the anniversary speech, we see a different orator from among the Politburo as no single member is allowed continuing favor over his colleagues.

Beria's cryptic figures were not without interest and I took occasion to compare his data on Soviet steel, electric power, and petroleum production with the extimates of Soviet production which British Defense Minister Shinwell had given publicly in a speech some four months ago. Beria's figures were based on a more recent estimate of Soviet production. With some pride Beria claimed that Soviet production in steel equaled that of the four main Western European producers - England, France, Belgium and Sweden, and in electric power he boasted that the Soviet exceeded France and the United Kingdom combined.

Somewhat significantly Beria omitted any reference to American production in these basic items, and failed to mention that even on the basis of his own claims, Soviet steel production is less than one-third that of the United States; petroleum about one-seventh, and electric power about one-third.

These comparative figures, which reflect overall industrial production, and the war potential of the free nations, are of course well known to the Kremlin. There is little reason to believe that a Stalin would fall into the errors of a Hitler by leaving these factors out of his calculations. Of course in their own minds the Soviet may offset the great industrial superiority of the West by reliance on the fact that they now devote to war purposes a far greater percentage than we of their steel and oil and electric power. This is an advantage which is declining as we turn to rearmament and would drop still further in a long drawn out conflict.

But even if, as Custine writes, the game is one sided, insofar as our relative knowledge of each other is concerned, despite an occasional bit of evidence vouchsafed us by the Kremlin, this Soviet policy of "blackout" is likely in the long run to boomerang on them thoughout the free world. By creating an apprehension of the unknown, it tends to force the pace of rearmament, and leads us to increased inventiveness so to be ready to meet at every point an adversary who apparently thinks he has everything to hide. Certainly Soviet policy challenges the intelligence officer to sharpen his wits. If we can rely upon the Toynbee theory that challenge provokes its response in those civilizations which survive, we in the West should come out of this dilemma with the best intelligence services in the world. In any event, the situation calls for all the ingenuity of an organization such as the CIA which, as one of its major tasks, has the job of pulling together the evidence on Soviet capabilities and intentions.

As this evidence is assembled it is subjected to analysis in the CIA itself and critical items are reviewed by an intelligence committee which is presided over by General Bedell Smith as Director, of CIA, and includes the representatives of the intelligence services of the Departments of State, of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, and of certain other governmental agencies. The Committee meets at frequent and regular intervals to produce their estimates of what the available intelligence shows. These estimates in turn are passed on to the policy making branches of the government.

In these days of perennial crises in the four corners of the earth the range of policy issues facing the State Department and the Pentagon are not limited to the Soviet bloc, but the most urgent problems, in one way or another, tie in to what the Soviet and its satellites can and are likely to do. Even a flare-up in the Middle East takes on significance in proportion to the danger it presents as opening a way for the advance of aggressive communism.

Estimates on Soviet capabilities must be drawn up as best we can under the conditions of information blackout I have described. Information on intentions presents the greatest difficulty. If one could safely argue from past precedent, a reasonable pattern could be outlined. The difficulty lies in the fact that in a system like that of the Kremlin quick changes of policy without public debate are always a possibility. This we learned in 1939 when the Soviet joined hands with Hitler.

Possibly the Soviet at times considers us a bit unpredictable. I have no doubt that the intelligence officers who advised the Kremlin of what the United States would do in Korea in June of 1950 felt that we

had practiced outright deception on them.

The questions on which our policy makers would like to have guidance from their intelligence advisers are numerous and varied. Here are some that are typical:

(1) Do the Soviet evidence any intention of precipitating a general war and under what conditions? This requires analysis of the relative strength of the Soviet World and of the Free World; how we appraise the Soviet views of our own willingness to resist. We know that they realize their present superiority in ground forces and probable numerical advantage in air strength and that they might have local successes in Europe or in Asia. But just how do they view the great industrial superiority of the free nations, their advantage in access to raw materials and advance in atomic weapons. All of these and a host of other questions enter into any appraisal of the likelihood of Soviet military action.

(2) If the USSR does not resort to direct military action, will they continue to rely on the tactics of infiltration and subversion and the use of satellite forces, and where, in the world, are they likely to direct their main efforts with these cold war weapons.

(3) How much hope does the Soviet still place in the collapse of the Capitalist system, loudly and insistently predicted for many years. Will it be their policy to drive us forward on the path of rearmament, which they cannot relish, in the hope that we will break our economic backs; or will the fear of our rearmament lead them to adopt a peace offensive often predicted but not yet clearly evident? Or to put it another way, is the fear of our rearmament a more potent influence on

Soviet policy than their hope that the armament race may prove disastrous to our economy?

(4) Will the Soviet view NATO rearmament, including the rearmament of Germany, as purely defensive in character as we view and declare it, or will they, at some point in the process of this rearmament, consider that the menace is too great to be tolerated?

I cite these questions as typical of the vital issues of the day. They are issues upon which our policy makers are entitled to a measure of factual guidance from the intelligence agencies. It is the duty of intelligence to fill in the jigsaw puzzle as the reports come in day by day in order to show where there is a solid foundation of fact as a basis for policy.

Obviously here stientific exactness is not possible. We can only take the experience of the past plus the impact of all knowable current bits of evidence and then mold a conclusion. An open mind and a willingness to accept new conclusions where the facts impose them are absolutely essential. Stubborn prejudice is fatal. Any intelligence officer who is unwilling to view new facts with an open mind despite firm convictions bred out of past experience is useless in our type of work. At the same time the intelligence officer must always keep in mind that he is not making policy; that is up to others. In the preparation of his estimates he is a fact finder. Once he exceeds that role he becomes useless as an intelligence officer.

Just as prejudice has no place in intelligence, neither has politics. Facts are neither Republican nor Democratic. And if the fearless report-

ing of the facts to the policy makers is colored with the prejudice pro or con of existing policies of government or of any political party, the intelligence has lost its integrity and its usefulness. From my experience in the Central Intelligence Agency under General Bedell Smith, I can state that no political pressures have ever influenced its action, the selection of its personnel or its forthright analysis of the evidence as we see it.

In addition to preparing estimates for long range policy guidance, CIA in conjunction with the other intelligence agencies has the problem of dealing with emergency situations. Here Pearl Harbor taught us many lessons.

At that time there was considerable evidence of Japanese intentions in the possession of various government agencies. If all this had been quickly assembled in one place and immediately considered by the competent intelligence officers of the government, the conclusions might well have given the correct answer as to where the Japanese attack would take place. It is unrealistic and unfair to place the burden of factual analysis of masses of evidence solely upon the over-burdened policy making officers of government, any one of whom may have the time to study only a fragmentary part of all the evidence available. These officers are entitled to have some of this work done for them and by those who should be as far as possible freed from the grinding task of meeting daily, sometimes hourly, calls for policy decision and action.

There has therefore been organized under the aegis of CIA, through the Committee that I mentioned above, a mechanism for almost instant analysis of crisis situations. All available data flows to a single point. Those competent to deal with it can be called together at a minute's notice.

The data is analysed and the results of that analysis are placed before the policy makers.

Obviously as long as people are human and are creatures of prejudice there is no hundred per cent assurance of perfect results but al least now we have the mechanixm to collect the evidence and persons deemed competent in their profession, and broadly representative of the intelligence capabilities of the government, are available to pass upon it. This is a real step forward from the situation that existed just ten years ago when Pearl Harbor was in the making.

If we are to have an adequate intelligence in time of crisis, we must prepare in time of peace. We have now seriously turned to this task of building what our military leaders agree in considering a first line of defense. We are getting over the old habit of relegating intelligence to a secondary position or of confusing it with mere intrigue and the more lurid side of espionage. It is a serious and honorable work essential to our security.

The job connot be done by government alone. It must be a cooperative enterprise. In the CIA we depend mightily on outside aid. We have here in the United States, in our universities, among our professional men and scientists, in our labor unions with world-wide connections, in our great business enterprises, a vast store of vital information. We cannot expect all of this talent to come to Washington, much as we should like it. Hence, we come, as missionaries, to ask your understanding of the problem. Also, we will be calling upon many of you in your various activities and professions to make a contribution to the sum total of our knowledge. With your help we can better present the facts on which to build a policy for security and peace.